



OUTLOOK AND GENERAL ECONOMICS EXTENSION WORK

IN 1938

A Summary for the North Central States

Prepared by
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Economics Section, Division of Subject Matter

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Foreword

This summary of the outlook and general economics extension work in the North Central States for 1938 has been prepared as a matter of record and to provide extension workers in the area involved with a composite picture of the work being done. It is recognized that outlook work is an integral part of many other phases of economics extension work, and there is a great amount of educational work done which would classify as pertaining to "general economics problems" not included in this summary. However, it is felt that the types of work and methods cited illustrate fairly well this general phase of extension educational work.

Credit is due the various State extension economists from whose annual reports much of the material included herein has been drawn. Acknowledgement is also made of the fact that in the various States, experiment-station and college staff members in the economics field have contributed materially to various phases of the economics extension program, either in an advisory capacity or by actual participation in various phases of such programs.

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SITUATION

The American farmer, in his attempts to acquire and maintain the best possible income and standard of living is called upon to make a multitude of important choices and decisions. Probably no other field of physical production presents as complex a set of problems to the individual enterpriser as does the field of agriculture. The successful farmer is usually one who has developed a rather full appreciation of the physical possibilities and limitations of the area in which he is located and, at the same time, has acquired a practical working knowledge of the play of economic forces related to his business. An understanding of the significance of major economic forces and current economic conditions and what they portend is prerequisite to intelligent action.

After all, in arriving at a decision as to either the best type and system of farming to be followed in a given area or current adjustments to be made in an established long-time program, the average farmer is faced with two major sets of conditions which constitute limiting factors to the things that can be done profitably. Although they are not all inclusive, on the average they are dominant. These two forces are the physiographic and economic conditions peculiar to the area and the time.

Economic Fluctuations Necessitate Continuous Farm Adjustments

In any area settled for a generation or more, the primary adjustment to the physiographic conditions usually has been made fairly well. Necessary adjustments to these forces thereafter are relatively minor. It is true that slow and subtle changes in these natural attributes themselves, over a period of time, eventually force certain adjustments in agricultural patterns. For instance the growing recognition of the progress of soil depletion is resulting in certain changes in the amount and kind of crops grown on individual farms to promote soil conservation. In certain areas more recently brought into cultivation, the degree of this shift is becoming, or probably should become, a major adjustment. It is also true that relatively short-time fluctuations in one or more of the components of the physiography of an area, such as the amount of precipitation, may force the farmers of an area to make certain shifts in their systems of farming which may or may not be permanent adjustments. However, by far the greatest adjustments that farmers have to make in an established agricultural area result from the play of economic forces.

As long as the agriculture of an area is of the self-sufficing type or there is an apparently unlimited market for the commodities produced at a reasonably profitable price, the significance of these economic forces is but dimly recognized by farmers. When, however, the agriculture of an area becomes well established, and competition for market outlets becomes particularly keen, a more general recognition on the part of farmers of the pressure of economic forces becomes apparent and a greater knowledge of the significance of these forces is necessary if success is to be attained.

The foregoing conditions fairly well typify the economic position of agriculture in this country prior to the past two decades. However, during the past two decades, with the rapid advances made toward commercialization in the agriculture of the North Central States area and the increased competition for market outlets for many of the major commodities produced within the area, farm people have become increasingly aware of the need for a better understanding of the forces influencing their progress toward economic security. As a result they have turned to the Extension Service for more help in the interpretation of previous and current economic conditions in relation to agriculture in order that they might plan their farm operations more intelligently for both the immediate and more distant future.

Increased Emphasis on Economics Educational Work

To meet this demand, in so far as possible, greater emphasis has been placed in recent years in the various North Central States' extension programs on the economic problems of farmers. One measurable bit of evidence is found in the number of extension economists employed in these 12 States over a period of time. In 1920 there were 27 State extension economists employed in this area. This number was increased to 75 by 1930 and to 88 in 1938.

Likewise, a summary of the annual reports of State specialists and county extension agents reveals corresponding evidence of the growth of this phase of educational work with farm people. Table 1, although confined to the outlook phase of such work, is indicative of the trend in various types of extension activity employed in promoting a better understanding of some of the economic problems about which farmers have to make decisions. These data are fairly representative of the trend in growth of other phases of the economics extension program for the United States as a whole and for the North Central States area. These data do not reflect the full amount of educational work being done in the outlook phase alone. Despite a considerable increase in lines of work directed specifically to outlook, a vast amount of outlook work done by extension economists, county agents, and other extension workers does not appear in such summarizations. More and more, this type of service is becoming an integral part of other lines of extension work and is not reported separately.

General Types of Economic Problems Facing Farmers

Anything like a complete analysis of the altered and fluctuating economic conditions affecting farmers during the past two decades that have

caused this increased demand for assistance would be excessively voluminous, and unnecessary for the purposes of this report. However, a few of the major elements worthy of mention are: (a) A widely fluctuating level of prices, (b) disappearance of free lands, (c) loss of export markets, (d) increased farm-debt burden, (e) increased mechanization of agriculture with a higher proportion of production cost represented by cash costs, (f) increased costs of production, (g) increased costs of distribution, (h) changing methods of distribution, (i) changing domestic demand for agricultural products, (j) low net incomes to farmers, and many others.

Table 1.--Extension educational work in outlook in the United States*

Item	Year			
	1935	1936	1937	1938
Days spent by agents and specialists	5,908	8,395	9,464	12,632
Communities in which work was conducted	8,968	10,995	14,125	15,619
Local farmer leaders assisting with outlook work	4,413	7,041	7,885	11,526
Outlook meetings held	5,183	6,191	7,795	9,832
News stories published	3,443	4,348	5,686	4,972
Circular letters	1,953	2,638	3,069	2,866
Farm visits	5,541	7,464	7,808	13,407
Office calls	82,332	78,863	109,665	77,375

* Data provided by Surveys and Reports Section, Division of Field Coordination, Extension Service.

At the same time there are constantly changing economic situations with respect to individual commodities or classes of commodities produced by farmers concerning which they need accurate and timely information in order to arrive at intelligent decisions as to specific action to be taken. Although such short-time and specific situations are characteristic of any period, their significance has become more apparent to the mass of farmers during these recent times of economic distress.

Problems directly associated with the longer term fundamental economic forces that present themselves to farmers for solution are many and varied. Among them are: (a) Major adjustments needed in the prevailing systems of farming to meet market demands more nearly and effectively, (b) adjustments needed in the individual farm financing system in light of prevailing and probable future changes in the general level of prices, (c) necessary adjustments growing out of (1) the agricultural debt structure built up during a period of inflated prices, (2) national policies and programs affecting agriculture, (3) State and local governmental costs as reflected in the farmers' tax burden, and (d) adjustments in crop acres and livestock production to meet changed conditions resulting from mechanization of agriculture, and similar matters.

Numerous problems that affect individual farmers, but necessitate group action to produce desired results, also are demanding the attention of farmers. National tariff policies, international trade agreements, national monetary policies, labor legislation in relation to its economic effects on agriculture, public-land programs and policies, legislation establishing marketing procedures for different commodities, distribution methods, financing, and many other such factors are typical problems having a direct bearing on the economic status of the farm population.

Other problems of shorter-term significance, yet highly important, are those associated with such fluctuations in conditions as the tendency for livestock numbers and relative prices to follow rather definite cyclical trends, the irregularly recurring period of "surpluses" and "deficits" with respect to most of the farm crops, the seasonal trends in the prices of given farm commodities and the variations from year to year of these seasonal trends; also the need for adjustments in short-term production plans in the light of such short-term variations in supplies and prices.

Educational Approach

All these and many other problems of an economic nature have received the attention of extension workers of these 12 States in their educational activities with farm people in recent years. A constant effort has been made to broaden the vision of farm people as to the significance of the various economic forces affecting their welfare and to develop their ability to interpret these forces in relation to their own businesses, both individually and collectively. At the same time much effort has been expended in making available to farm people economic facts, in an easily interpretable form, which they must have at their command. Educational activities in this field may then be said to center around educating farmers in the interpretation of economic facts and providing them with such facts as have a pertinent bearing on their business activities.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

General Activities

Decided progress has been made in recent years in encouraging farmers to study the course of economic events and, in light of the knowledge thus developed, to order their own affairs more advisedly both as individuals and as members of the existing social and economic order. Various methods of encouraging this type of study have been employed by extension workers in economics. Among them may be listed economic schools, joint rural-urban discussion groups and forums, general discussion of major economic problems in an objective manner at different types of meetings called primarily for other purposes, providing material for publication in various papers and magazines reaching the farm population, use of the radio, and the like. In many instances such work is proving an effective means of approach through the consideration of the various agricultural programs in which farm people are

actively participating. Most of these programs have as a major objective the amelioration of a specific economic situation of significance to farmers.

As many of the problems involved necessitate group action either directly or indirectly through legislation, it is essential that urban people as well as rural people appreciate their significance. To the end that urban people may develop a better understanding of these rural problems, considerable effort on the part of economics extension specialists, county extension workers, and others is expended in an attempt to reach such groups. This is done through appearances before city service clubs at their regularly scheduled meetings, in round tables, discussion groups, forums, and similar meetings involving urban residents only or at joint meetings with farm people, and through the use of the urban press and the radio.

Economics schools.

Worth-while work has been done in encouraging farm people themselves to consider objectively some of the economic problems facing them through conducting "economics schools" for rural people. In these schools such matters as price fluctuations and the factors causing them, the relation of tariff policies to agricultural welfare, national monetary policies, and other relevant matters are given consideration.

In at least two States, formally organized economics schools involving a sequence of meetings with a group of enrolled participants were in operation during 1938. The following quotation from their annual report gives a brief outline of the work in Illinois:

"Agricultural economics schools.--That Illinois farmers have changed their ideas concerning important economic problems as a result of the agricultural-economics schools is very evident to those who have been constantly in touch with Illinois farm leaders for the past 10 years. This change in attitude is particularly noticeable in connection with foreign trade and with respect to the factors that are responsible for variations in the income of agriculture as an industry. Changes of this type come slowly and are difficult to measure; nevertheless, there is a continued interest in agricultural-economics schools, and this project is one which will be continued in 1939. Farm advisers are becoming more familiar with topics of this kind and are showing less hesitancy in leading discussion groups on economic subjects.

"Agricultural economics schools were held in 17 counties in 1938 (table 2). Members of the staff spent 26 days conducting 31 meetings which were attended by 649 farmers. These meetings are held primarily in the winter months and are conducted as discussion meetings. In addition to the meetings conducted by the members of the staff in agricultural economics, farm advisers in the 17 counties held two or more additional classes.

"Agricultural-economics schools consist of a series of four to six lessons, one each on topics of timely interest to Illinois farmers. A

mimeographed textbook has been prepared to sell for 20 cents each to the cooperating farmers. An enrollment of at least 30 men and women must be secured before the series is scheduled for a county. There were two series of schools available in 1938. The first series consisted of four lessons as follows: (1) Why farm prices change, (2) Money and credit, (3) Farmers' interest in taxation, and (4) The farmers' interest in world trade. The second series contained six lessons as follows: (1) Basic facts about marketing, (2) Basic facts concerning cooperative marketing, (3) Increasing the efficiency of marketing, (4) Factors which influence the income of agriculture, (5) Factors which influence the level of living of farm families, and (6) Tenancy problems and remedies. The first series was available only to

Table 2.--Agricultural-economics schools attended by staff members, 1938

Worker	Days in field	Number of county contacts	Number of meetings	Attendance
P. E. Johnston	7	7	7	116
G. L. Jordan	1	1	1	40
E. M. Hughes	1	1	1	18
L. J. Norton	5	5	8	236
L. H. Simerl	10.5	12	13	199
E. J. Working	1	1	1	40
Total	25.5	27	31	649

those counties that had not previously held schools. The second series was available primarily to those counties that held the first series schools in 1936. A representative of the staff of agricultural economics was present for the discussion at the first and fourth lessons, and the farm advisers were responsible for the discussion on all other lessons. A better discussion was had where the farmers spent some time in studying the lesson before coming in for the meeting.

"The first series school booklet was revised and remimeographed in 1938. For quite a number of the people who attend these meetings the mimeographed material is probably in too much detail and is rather technical. Difficulty has been experienced in presenting the complicated topics in a simple and concise form. It is felt that some improvement may be possible in this connection for future studies."

Likewise in Ohio a somewhat similar approach to the problem of developing a better understanding of the economic forces affecting farmers was employed. The following quotation indicates briefly the general nature of this work:

"General economics schools.--During the past year the staff of this division again conducted general economics schools for farmers in the State. With many new developments taking place in our economic system, in our foreign

trade policy, and in our philosophy of agricultural production, there has been considerable interest in the broader aspects of the agricultural problem. This year, in the general economics schools, foreign trade, reciprocal trade agreements, and various Government plans for increasing the prices of agricultural products through price fixing were of particular interest. This phase of the discussion led to a consideration of some of the fundamental differences between agriculture and industry from the standpoint of control of production and price determination. Some time was also devoted to recent developments in the field of cooperative buying.

"Plan of procedure.--On request from the county agent for these schools, a general outline of the material to be covered was sent to him.

"The original plan called for four sessions for each school. However, requests for such meetings and the lack of personnel necessitated curtailment, and actually these schools ran for one, two, or three meetings.

"In line with our experience in 1937, the first year in which these schools were attempted, the procedure was changed somewhat from that used at that time. Rather than follow a set outline of subject matter for the entire school, a general outlook discussion was carried on at the first session in all instances out of which evolved the broader questions of interest to the group which were considered in later meetings. The result of this procedure was that much more interest was displayed by the group as evidenced by their active participation in the discussion. In the final analysis, the subject matter considered was almost identical to that which might have been presented by a more formal method.

"During the year, 26 of these sessions were held in 15 counties of the State with a total of 1,316 in attendance, or an average of 51 per session.

"Function of the agent.--It was the duty of the agent to secure enrollment. This was done largely by means of a circular letter sent to those who he felt might be interested, securing the names of those who wished to enroll.

"News articles prepared by the agent also helped to interest some who did not receive the circular letter.

"In some cases a few city people became interested in the course and as a result added a different point of view to the discussions."

Educational work with urban groups.

In connection with the extension activities directed toward urban groups in order that they may have a better understanding of the interrelationship of agriculture and industry and the economic welfare of the two classes of people, the Ohio report continues:

"Civic groups throughout the State are showing a continued interest in the economic situation and its relation to urban groups. During the year, 18 meetings were held by various service clubs in 18 counties throughout the State at which members of the farm-management staff discussed the economic status of the farmer and the interdependence of urban and rural groups. A total of 807 persons were in attendance at these meetings."

The Wisconsin annual report indicates in part a somewhat similar line of work in that State:

"As the extent to which action by Government influences economic life has become more widely recognized, and as governmental programs have more directly influenced farming operations, the need for general economic information by farmers and by people living in villages has increased. A measure of the increased interest in this kind of information was found in the extent to which rural weeklies used short articles carrying economic information and the avidity with which those who attended the farmer-businessmen banquets, sponsored jointly by the Extension Service of the Wisconsin College of Agriculture and the Wisconsin Conservation Committees, participated in the discussion.

"During the year 14 joint farmer-businessmen meetings were held throughout the State, with a total attendance of 1,780 or 125 per meeting. The influence of these meetings was much wider than indicated by the attendance record because of the extensive report of the discussion at the meetings which was carried in the local papers. The attendance was [made up of] community committeemen and their invited guests - business and professional men from villages and cities of the county.

"Outlook information was also discussed at several commercial service clubs such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and Community Clubs. Each club member usually invited in a farmer as his guest, so there was much farm atmosphere to the meeting. Whenever a county agent schedules a week of [outlook] meetings he usually makes arrangements with the different service clubs to invite farmers to a dinner or supper at which the agricultural outlook is discussed."

This latter type of extension activity is not in itself a major line of work in that its scope and character are somewhat unpredictable from year to year. However, even though inadequately reported by extension workers, it is known that the total volume of such work is considerable. Extension workers in the economics field have helped arrange for and have participated in numerous farmer-businessmen conferences as well as in panel or forum discussions on a rather large scale with strictly urban groups. Such work is eminently worth while and is doing much to develop a better understanding of farmers' economic problems on the part of urban dwellers as well as a spirit of cooperation between the two groups.

Economic service on public problems.

Numerous other economic problems of general interest in a given locality received the attention of the Central States extension economists

during 1938. Prior to the introduction of the land-use planning activity, most of the attention to problems such as the tax burden borne by farmers, local government costs, freight rates in relation to agricultural products, and similar matters concerning which a considerable amount of educational work was done, were handled in a somewhat disassociated manner. Since the land-use planning work was well under way in most of these States in 1938, consideration of this type of work is, in the main, left for inclusion in a report on land-use planning work.

However, extension economists are constantly rendering service to the general public through the assembly of pertinent economic facts throwing light upon particular points of issue of general concern and in that respect are rendering a worth-while public service. An example of this type of work is carried in the annual report of the extension economist from North Dakota.

"Agriculture in North Dakota has a vital stake in the level and structure of freight rates. Increases in rates, such as have taken place recently, have the effect of lowering the farm price of products distant from market to a greater extent than the farm price of products close to market.

"During December 1937 and January 1938 the extension economist prepared economic exhibits showing the status of the North Dakota farmer and his ability as a producer and consumer to bear the additional costs which the railroads were asking in Ex Parte 123, 'The Fifteen Percent Case.'

"The decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission in disallowing the requested 15 percent general increase and substituting therefor a 5 percent increase on agricultural products and a 10 percent increase on most other products, except lignite coal, has saved North Dakota people \$3,319,952 in additional freight costs which would have been drawn from them if the original request had been granted.

"On November 9, 1938, the extension economist appeared for the shippers in the North Dakota truck case. The truck companies were petitioning the North Dakota Board of Railroad Commissioners for an increase of 10 percent in the rates.

"The decision in this case denied the truckers the increase asked for, which has resulted in a saving of many thousands of dollars in transportation costs to the shippers of the State. These are services in which the farmer is vitally interested."

Outlook

Educational activities covered under the general heading, "Outlook," constitute a major phase of economics-extension activities. In all the States considerable stress is laid on the preparation and effective dissemination of timely outlook information so that farmers may be better informed when deciding on current courses of action. This, of course, does not preclude continued emphasis on developing an understanding of the more slowly moving economic forces that may influence agricultural development over a period of

years, but is complementary thereto. In all cases, every possible effort is being given to getting such information incorporated into all extension activities where at all applicable. Noteworthy progress has been made in this direction in recent years and was continued throughout the year 1938.

For the purposes of this report, outlook activities within the States have been subdivided into three major phases: (a) Making information available in usable form, (b) training leaders, and (c) dissemination of outlook information to the general public. Although each of these subphases overlaps the others somewhat, each presents a fairly distinct set of problems and demands different methods of approach.

Assembly and preparation of outlook information.

For a number of years extension workers in most of the North Central States have followed the practice of preparing an annual outlook statement in summary form for the information and use of all extension workers, agricultural teachers, farm leaders, and farmers in general. Although economic situations are constantly changing and current economic information is essential if farmers are to make the wisest decisions, it is recognized that emphasis once a year on economic conditions in general and the particular situations pertaining to the various components of the general picture not only has the advantage of aiding farmers to develop a better perspective of the situation facing them, but also has the desirable attributes of a campaign type of educational activity. In addition, the preparation of such a report for use in educational programs provides an effective working tool for those extension workers engaged in phases of work involving economic considerations but not wholly of an economic nature. The very fact that in many instances noneconomic subject-matter specialists participate in the preparation of such State outlook reports provides them with an opportunity to make intimate contact with such work at least once a year and thereby enables them to incorporate economic considerations into their major lines of educational work in a much more satisfactory manner.

Available records indicate that 11 of the 12 States in this area prepared State annual outlook reports during 1938 in volume ranging from 6,000 copies to 30,000. (Quantitative information not readily available from all States.) These State outlook reports varied from six- to eight-page accordion-fold leaflets, issued in two different States to supplement the national outlook report, to regular bulletin-size reports of as many as 36 pages in length. In several instances these reports were an expansion of a regular monthly or quarterly outlook statement issued by the various States. In addition, several of these States obtained a supply of the national outlook report issued by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture for distribution to farmers within the States involved.

In 7 of these 12 States, the preparation of outlook information involves the issuance of a monthly printed leaflet or circular, devoted entirely to economic information indicating current changes in the general situation and carrying current information, of significance in the respective States, concerning major commodities. In two others, outlook statements are regularly

carried in a general extension monthly paper; and in a tenth State a quarterly statement is issued in bulletin form. Only 2 of the 12 States do not have a regularly scheduled extension publication carrying outlook information, and they prepare statements at appropriate intervals, make them available to the press, and use other means of getting this information before the public.

An invaluable service is also rendered to farm people by extension economists through the preparation of timely and appropriate outlook and other economic information for the use of county agents, other extension workers, vocational teachers, and other leaders. In some instances this is done on a regularly scheduled basis, and in others on request. For instances, Ohio reports:

"While the primary aim in the preparation of material of this type is to acquaint farmers with current and long-time economic trends, in many cases material is prepared and sent only to our own extension staff, Smith-Hughes teachers, and the State institute staff in order that they in turn may disseminate it to farmers through their publications, meetings, and individual contacts. In order to keep these coworkers currently informed, a mimeographed publication 'Ohio County Agent Special' is published monthly. Other mimeographed material is prepared and sent out from time to time to this group, including 'Current Economic Topics for Ohio Farmers.'

"Many requests come from the State and county staff members for special economic information. Many of these requests have been for statistics on imports and exports, industrial and agricultural production, livestock numbers by counties, etc. Much information of this type has also been furnished individuals in reply to their specific requests.

"For years the department has been collecting and keeping up to date complete files from all sources which bear on the economic problems of agriculture. During the year the amount of information on file has been amplified and has been invaluable in preparing publications and talks, and in answering requests."

In a few States extension economists service the county agents through providing them at least once a year with a handbook of pertinent economic information brought up to date. In others, separates of such information for filing currently in loose-leaf folders are provided county agents by State workers who have more ready access to source material.

A few of the States prepare a limited amount of outlook chart material for the use of county agents and others. Iowa has the most complete arrangement for such service work and reports for 1938:

"A set of six wall charts dealing with different phases of the farm outlook was prepared for all county agents, Smith-Hughes agricultural teachers, and members of the State extension staff. Of the six charts, five were of the pictorial diagram type. A number of special wall charts were prepared during the year by the economic-information staff for other specialists."

A more specialized type of outlook statement is prepared on a weekly basis, particularly in those States having farm-management associations, for the use of the field men employed in this work and for members of the associations. In at least two States, this type of special statement is prepared each week and copies are provided to county agents, Smith-Hughes teachers, and other extension workers in addition to those referred to above. In one of these States the weekly statement is broadcast over the radio.

In at least two States - Indiana and Kansas, economics extension specialists prepared for the use of county agents film strips portraying many of the most salient outlook features of significance to farmers of the respective States. These film strips were made available to local extension workers at cost.

Training conferences.

State.--As it is impossible for the State extension economists to meet all the demands for outlook educational work, and as it is highly desirable for all extension workers to be informed concerning the economic situation and in a position to use outlook information in their respective fields of work, several of the States hold outlook conferences for their staff members immediately after the national outlook conference. Such State staff conferences, of either 1 or 2 days' duration, are given over to an analysis of the outlook information and to effective methods of presenting such information to the general public. For instance, in South Dakota: "At the State staff conference the various commodity reports were assigned to different members of the staff for presentation. After each presentation, a discussion period was provided during which time not only the outlook material but the manner of presenting it was discussed."

In most of these States the preparation of the State outlook report is a cooperative endeavor in which the various interested subject-matter specialists participate. In others, the first draft of the State report is prepared by the economics staff and presented to other staff members for review and suggestions as to changes. In some of these States a tentative draft of a State report is prepared in cooperation with various subject-matter specialists prior to the national outlook conference. Indiana reports in this connection: "The various sections were prepared and revised in a series of staff meetings prior to the national outlook conference. Following the national conference, such revisions as were necessary to conform with the national report were made. The manuscript was then presented to the agricultural experiment station, college and extension staffs, before it was published."

Likewise, Iowa indicates that: "Before the Washington conference, meetings were held with each commodity outlook committee. These meetings have proved valuable as a means of arousing interest in the outlook work and in obtaining ideas for conducting the county agent conference."

District.--In 8 of these 12 States, district outlook training schools were held for the purpose of training county agents and other local leaders

in the use of outlook information. In several instances, in addition to the extension personnel and local farm leaders, representatives of other agencies working directly with farm people were invited and attended these conferences. A few such training schools were for county extension workers only. The following quotation from the Illinois annual report indicates not only the way in which such conferences are conducted, but also some of the results obtained:

"District leader training schools were held in 18 areas of the State in December 1938. These meetings were attended by representatives from every county in the State, there being a total attendance of 1,978 leaders; 1,418 were men, and 560 were women. An attempt was made to get representatives of various organizations to attend these meetings, and the extent to which this was accomplished is indicated in the report. The attendance at these leader-training schools varied from 56 to 221, while the attendance by counties varied from 2 to 83. * * * quite a large percentage of the people attending these conferences had attended one or more previous conferences. Over one-fourth had attended for 3 or more years. An attempt is made at these training schools to provide farm and home advisers and other local leaders with information concerning the outlook for 1939 so that this information will be presented in county and community unit meetings. The monthly reports of farm advisers alone indicate that 101 outlook meetings were held in 22 counties in the last half of December, and that these meetings were attended by 5,045 people. The reports indicate that 102 meetings were scheduled for January in 21 additional counties. The farm advisers' reports for 1937 indicate that outlook work was conducted in 561 communities in 45 counties. Four hundred and forty-five voluntary local leaders assisted with this work, devoting 1,053 days to this activity. One hundred and forty-two meetings were held in 58 counties.

"The outlook work in Illinois is supervised by a college committee and is participated in by a large number of the staff both in agriculture and home economics. The district training schools are attended by one staff member from [the] agricultural economics [department], one from either animal husbandry or agronomy, and a third from home economics. In the dairy areas a representative of the dairy husbandry department is usually present and a representative of the department of horticulture appears on the program at the meetings in southern Illinois. In 1938, nine additional members of the staff in agriculture and home economics assisted those in agricultural economics in conducting the training schools. Other members of the college staff also assist in preparing the State outlook report."

Nebraska is one of the States where district training conferences were limited to local extension personnel. Nebraska's annual report carries the following statement in regard to these conferences:

"Following the Washington conference, a series of nine district training conferences were held wherein outlook information was stressed. These were joint conferences of county and home demonstration agents and were conducted by farm- and home-management specialists. The purpose of these conferences was to give training to county extension workers in outlook and

farm-management information. Background economic information was stressed * * *, not only for the general business situation but also for the various important agricultural commodities produced in Nebraska. These were joint sessions of men and women for the entire conference, except that commodity outlook information was given only to county agents while home demonstration agents attended separate sessions for a discussion of home-management problems. These conferences were well attended, and much interest was shown on the part of the county representatives attending. [Previously] * * * a handbook showing charts and graphs had been prepared covering the general business situation and various important agricultural commodities as well as some farm-management data. The handbooks were distributed at these conferences and were used as the basis for discussion."

Dissemination of the outlook to the public.

As indicated by the foregoing brief discussion and sample quotations from State annual reports, the dissemination and interpretation of outlook and other economic information is recognized as a vital function of the various State extension services of this area.

A well-developed and coordinated system for promoting an understanding of the economic problems encountered by farm people is found in practically all these States, and extension workers from both the State and county offices are giving much thought and attention to aiding farm people with such problems.

Practically every effective method known to extension workers is utilized in this effort, varying all the way from individual consultation to large group meetings and including various types of visual instruction, the press, and the radio. No small part of the success being attained in these efforts is due to the efforts of the extension personnel, complemented by the efforts of other agency personnel and local farm leaders who have received training in the use of outlook information from extension workers and are currently kept informed of new economic developments.

Outlook meetings.--Meetings of one type or another continue to be one of the most popular methods of getting outlook information before the mass of farmers. Such meetings are particularly effective in that they provide an opportunity for free discussion between technicians and farmers and for interpretation of such information in relation to practical problems facing farmers. In other words, they make possible direct contacts, at which time the application of outlook information may be considered in a realistic way.

With the advent of the various governmentally sponsored agricultural programs necessitating frequent meetings of farmers, extension workers almost universally have coordinated their outlook extension work with these meetings. Both the nature of such meetings and the intimate relationship between the current economic situation and the objectives of such programs make this coordination of work most effective from the standpoint of the extension worker.

The manner of conducting the outlook work with farm people in North Dakota in 1938 may be cited as an example of this coordination:

"The A.A.A. educational meetings.--One of the efficient ways in which outlook information was distributed was through the meetings of the county and community A.A.A. committees. In early December 1937, a series of seven district meetings was conducted in the following places: Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Minot, Williston, Valley City, Bismarck, and Dickinson. The attendance at these meetings numbered approximately 2,000 committeemen. They in turn were expected to conduct meetings back in the communities. The background information presented consisted largely of farm outlook material. Practically all the county meetings use the outlook report in conducting their work.....

"An effective procedure.--This is a very effective way of getting farmers interested in outlook work. Here the information is given specific application and is appreciated more than when it is given merely for information's sake. Never before have we had the organization machinery through which to distribute information such as we now have. There are in the neighborhood of 110,000 A.A.A. cooperators who at some time or other attend meetings and receive outlook information. Then there are thousands outside the organization who are reached through the printed copies of the outlook and the various other means of disseminating the information.

"County program-planning meetings.--Another effective means of distributing outlook information in 1938 was through county program-planning meetings. The extension economist attended 40 meetings at which the outlook was presented and discussed. These committees range in membership from 15 to 30. Very likely, information of this nature is carried back to the communities by these committeemen in conducting their meetings and in casually talking with their neighbors. The farm outlook plays a very definite part in their educational program within the counties. The outlook reports are given out to each committeeman in addition to those mailed out to other farmers in the county by the county agent. Here again is an opportunity for giving the outlook information specific application to recognized problems.....

"Special meetings and uses.--On February 24, 1938, the 1938 outlook was presented at a school for field men of the Federal land bank in Fargo. There were 60 people in attendance at this meeting. Outlook information is accepted as subject matter to be studied at these annual schools."

However, in addition to the dissemination of outlook at special meetings called in connection with various types of agricultural action programs, special meetings with farm people for the purpose of reviewing the current and probable future economic situation continue to be a major method in the dissemination of outlook information. Practically every State in this area continues to emphasize this type of work. An example of this type of meeting, indicating a part which local extension workers take in promoting an understanding of economic developments, is provided by the Indiana annual report:

"Following the district outlook conferences, county agents, with their assistants and local leaders, conducted county and community outlook

meetings. Most of the meetings were held during December and January. A survey at the close of the winter season showed that 728 such meetings were held with a total attendance of 35,767. At many of these meetings local leaders assisted the county extension staff in presenting the outlook material.

"Outlook information was used as a part of the program at the 37 farm-management schools. Commodity outlook information was given at 21 hog schools, 6 livestock-marketing meetings, 9 poultry-marketing meetings, and 5 dairy-marketing meetings."

As progress is made in the development of an understanding of economic forces, there is a tendency for outlook work to become integrated with other subject-matter extension activities as indicated by the preceding quoted paragraph, and by previous references to use of such information by all extension workers.

Likewise, as this work has become more definitely established and better organized, the various States have expanded their outlook program to cover the full year with particular emphasis being placed on specific commodities at the time of year when farmers are laying their plans for the subsequent year in relation to such commodities.

This type of program can be illustrated by an excerpt from the Illinois report for 1938:

"Grain outlook meetings were held in important wheat-producing counties in June and July, and in important corn and soybean counties in October and November. Forty-five days of staff time were devoted to these meetings held in 55 counties and attended by 2,021 farmers. The grain meetings were held for the most part in the evenings during the harvest period, as this is the time of year when farmers are most interested in learning those facts that will help them in the marketing of their grain crop.

"We have been very much encouraged by the attendance at meetings held at a time of year when farmers are busy with harvest work. The reaction we have received at this point indicates very clearly the importance of timeliness in doing outlook work.

"Livestock outlook meetings.--The very keen demand on the part of Illinois farmers for feeding cattle and lambs in the fall of 1938 accounted for the excellent attendance at county livestock outlook meetings. Sixty-three days of staff time were devoted to holding 65 meetings, which were attended by 3,023 farmers. The attendance in 1938 at 65 meetings was over 500 greater than the attendance in 1937 at 68 meetings. These meetings were started in August and except for a few held in southern Illinois were completed in September. This is the time of year when Illinois farmers are making plans for their feeding operations for the winter period. They are, therefore, eager for information concerning the general economics situation, the supply of feed, hay, and pasture, as well as the probable supply of feeder cattle and feeder lambs. They are also interested in the relative supply of various grades of feeders and in the current prices for the different grades and classes.

"Since these meetings were also held at a time of year when farmers are fairly busy at field work, it was necessary to hold them in the evening. This project was cooperative between the department of animal husbandry and agricultural economics on the one hand, and between the extension staff and the livestock marketing committee of the Illinois Agricultural Association on the other hand. There were at least two people on the program at each meeting, one from the college and one from the marketing organization. At a number of the meetings there was also a speaker from one of the commission firms from a nearby market."

Numerous other types of meetings could be referred to, such as that in Michigan where "Discussion of the agricultural outlook at a series of 13 meetings was held in cooperation with the St. Paul office of the Farm Credit Administration. This series of meetings was set up particularly for borrowers of the Farm Loan and Production Credit Associations. Attendance at this series of meetings totaled 7,275." At another point in this report it is indicated that "During the year 10 luncheon groups in various parts of the State requested this (outlook) subject for discussion. Total attendance at these 10 meetings was 750."

Although the types of meetings receiving major emphasis in the outlook extension program vary from State to State this type of extension activity continues to be one of the most productive. In so far as activities along these lines are concerned, for 1938 they have differed from previous years primarily in the extent to which the outlook considerations have been correlated with field work scheduled primarily for other, although closely allied, purposes, and further movement in the direction of timing specific phases of outlook work immediately to precede the time when farmers have to decide upon a particular line of operations for the year ahead.

An innovation in outlook meetings was one held in Iowa--an innovation both in methods used and the group of people involved. The report of that meeting follows:

"A special group of young married couples has been meeting for the past year or so to discuss some mutual problems. This is a group which has, in general, been neglected in the attempt to carry on educational programs in many counties. In many instances the emphasis has been placed on the youngsters of club age and * * * those who were well established in their homes and in their business, [this group of young people being skipped over.] It is the intent of this project to deal with the problems which these younger married couples are especially interested in.

"A committee meeting was held with about 15 of these young married people in the fall, and definite plans were made for a series of meetings throughout the winter months. It is their desire to mix in both the social and the business side of farming. The net result was a first social gathering, at which some 65 or 70 couples attended. The meeting of particular interest in this report consisted of an outlook discussion by the farm-management and home-management specialists following a dinner meeting, at which about 160 people were in attendance. After a brief review of the

family outlook by Miss Cannon and the farm business outlook by an extension economist, the groups were put into small conference groups of 15 to 20 people. Each of these conference groups had an older farmer as a leader in whom the group had considerable confidence, who was capable of leading a discussion with the group and who had been following the outlook and farm-management work in the counties for a considerable period of time. Five of the nine leaders were members of the farm-business associations, three of the members had kept farm records for a period of 10 years or longer, and all had participated in the numerous outlook meetings held during the past decade.

"The new departure in the outlook work consisted of giving each of the groups the same problem and asking them to decide what they would do under these particular circumstances. These problems were given to members of the group in mimeographed form, and they were asked to indicate what they would do under this particular circumstance [presented]. After each group had been given 25 minutes to discuss this problem, their leader was asked to report back their recommendations. Some very excellent suggestions relative to additional information needed in order to answer the problems correctly as well as an interpretation of the outlook which had been given earlier assisted greatly in fixing in the minds of the group both the farm business and the family application of the outlook as presented."

Use of the press.--Both the rural and urban press are cooperative in the publication of outlook information provided them by State and county extension personnel. In addition to the annual outlook statement's being carried in its entirety or summarized, timely outlook statements throughout the year, as prepared by extension workers, are given wide publicity through this medium. All extension workers appreciate the value of the press for reaching the general public and make liberal use of it. Specific evidence of this is indicated in most of the annual reports. The following quotations show the extent and character of this type of cooperation:

North Dakota: "Each year a copy of the annual outlook is sent to 178 newspapers in the State, of which 169 are weeklies and 9 are dailies, with a reported circulation of 321,969 for 177 of these papers. A summarized statement is also prepared and sent to these newspapers in the form of press releases. From 30 to 40 copies of the annual outlook are sent to agricultural papers and magazines outside the State.

"Some of the newspapers publish a summary of the whole report; others publish installments. By these means alone a wide distribution is given to the outlook reports."

Indiana: "A series of six feature news articles on the outlook was prepared. This series was published by the leading daily newspapers of the State. Copies of these releases were sent to all county agents, who made them available to their local papers. Reports from the county agents show that these stories were carried in part or in total in 211 papers in Indiana, not including 2 large Indianapolis papers, and it is estimated that 208,275 farm people were reached with outlook information."

Wisconsin: "In order to secure a wider spread of the economic information prepared for 'Economic Information for Wisconsin Farmers,' parts of the material were rewritten as press releases. Examination of the weekly newspapers coming to the extension editor's office indicates that a large number of weekly rural papers printed these news articles dealing with information of an economic nature. During the year, 30 press releases were prepared."

In connection with the foregoing type of contribution to the press, much material of the same general character as that referred to on pages 10-12 under the heading, Assembly and Preparation of Outlook Information, in the form of monthly statements for the use of farmers in the various States, also is provided the press in most instances and is widely quoted.

Use of the radio.--The value of the radio as a means of reaching farm people likewise is fully appreciated by the economics extension specialists in these States. Although this type of extension work is inadequately reported in most annual reports submitted by extension specialists, the following quotations are indicative of the radio work being done in most of the States:

Indiana: "Radio talks on the outlook were prepared at the time of publishing the annual outlook report. Six of these talks approximating from 7 to 15 minutes in length were sent to county agents in counties having radio stations. The stations over which these talks were given are as follows:

<u>Town</u>	<u>Station</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Station</u>
1. La Fayette	WBAA	6. Muncie	WLBC
2. Gary	WIND	7. Anderson	WHBU
3. South Bend	WSBT	8. Indianapolis	WFEM
4. Elkhart	WTRC	9. Terre Haute	WBOW
5. Fort Wayne	WOWO	10. Evansville	WGFB

"Radio talks on current outlook information were prepared from time to time during the year and given over the La Fayette station, WBAA. These talks were sent to county agents in counties using the above radio-station facilities"

Minnesota: Arrangements were made "for a definite schedule of outlook information to be presented by extension economists over the radio during the months of December 1938 and January and February 1939. Similar plans will be made for the balance of the year, but for 3 months at a time. General economic information as well as outlook will be presented. A total of 10 talks were given during this 3-month period by extension specialists."

Iowa: "The economic information staff presented a large quantity of outlook information over station WOI in 1938 and prepared a large amount of outlook material for use by other radio stations in the State. A total of 40 radio releases on outlook material prepared by the extension editorial staff was sent out besides fully that many more prepared by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. About 20 outlook discussions were presented over WOI.

"Broadcasts of the Federal crop reports were conducted on each crop reporting day from May to November. This series was handled in cooperation with the Iowa office of the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service of the B.A.E. A short summary of business conditions and price changes for the week was presented each Saturday in the Extension Hour over WOI."

In South Dakota, where somewhat less favorable circumstances exist for reaching the public effectively via radio, resort has been made to the use of electrical transcriptions for transmitting the outlook over the air. In that State, eight electrical transcriptions were prepared concerning the 1938 outlook and provided to six radio stations in the State. Plans were laid for continuing this procedure during 1939.

